

**SHEILA
MCKECHNIE
FOUNDATION**

**UNLEASHING
SOCIAL POWER**

SMK Campaigner Survey 2024: results

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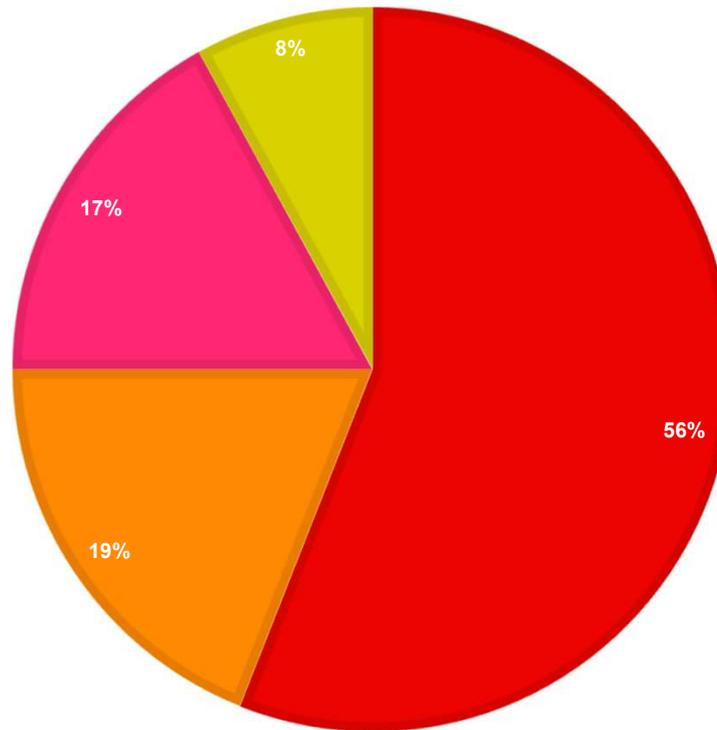
About the results

**Survey conducted between
1 February 2024 and
7 March 2024**

**145 respondents
(breakdown in final section)**

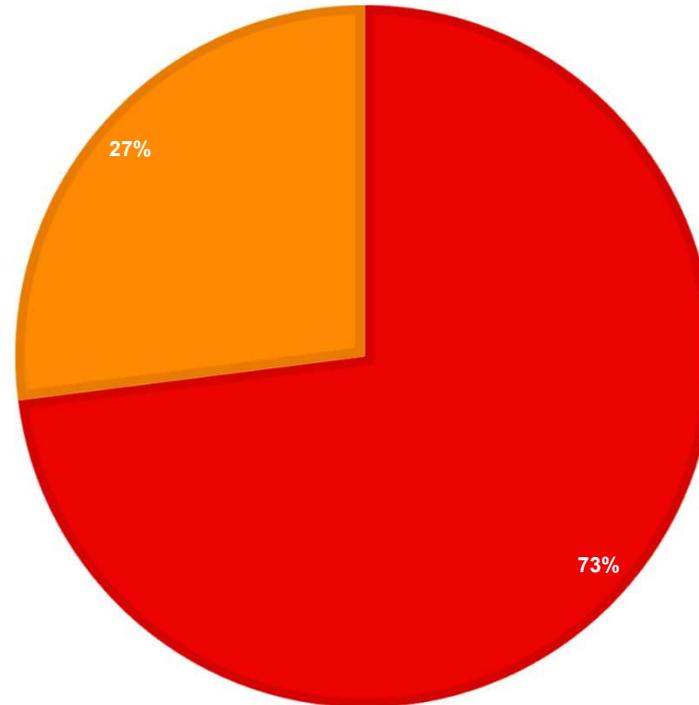
DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS A CAMPAIGNER, A CHANGE-MAKER, AN ACTIVIST, OR SOMETHING ELSE?

■ Campaigner ■ Changemaker ■ Activist ■ Other



IN WHAT CAPACITY ARE YOU INVOLVED IN CAMPAIGNING?

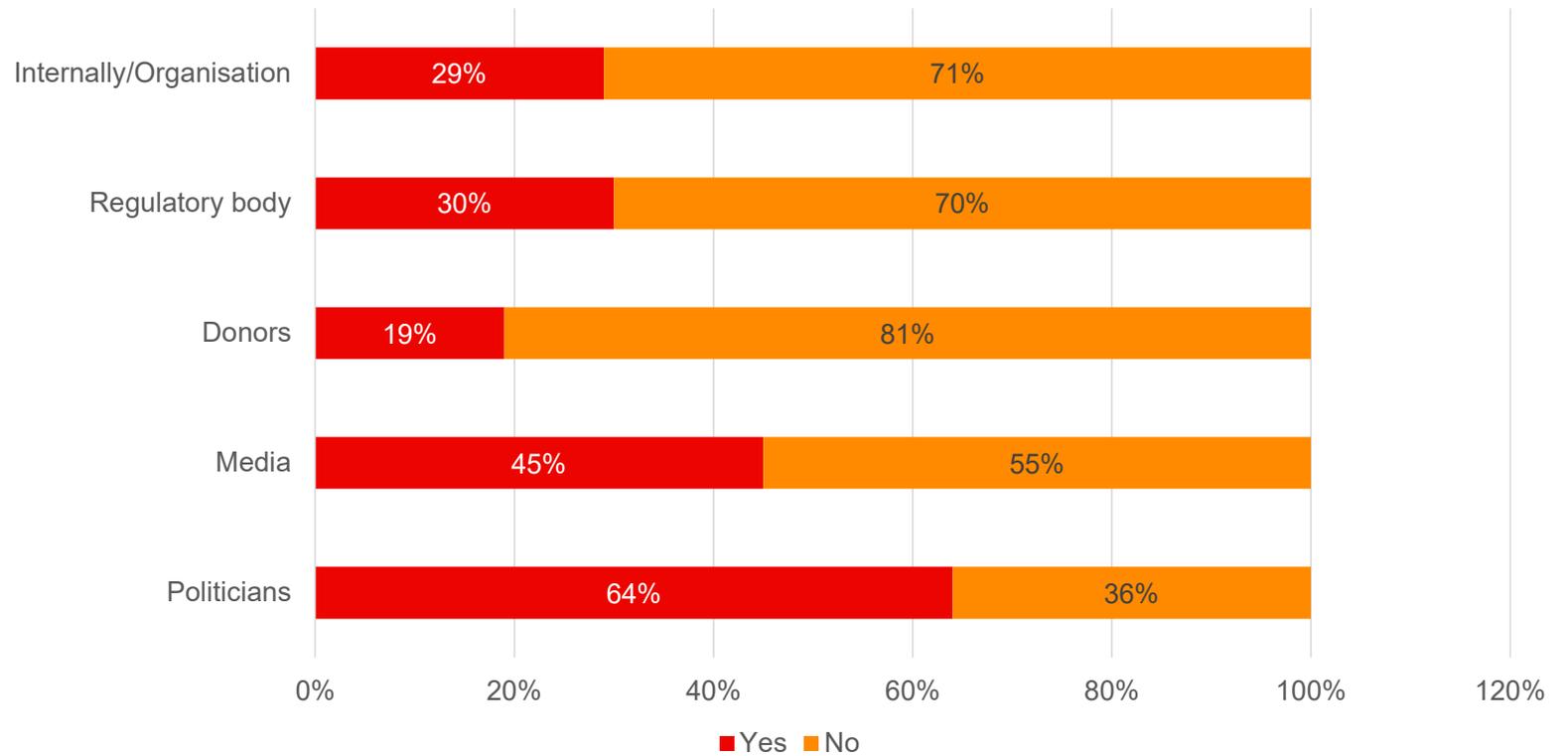
■ In a paid role ■ In my own time/ unpaid position



Space to campaign

NB Percentages may not total 100% as figures have been rounded to a whole number and where participants were able to select more than one answer

Are you aware of any resistance or backlash from any of the following in response to your campaigning activities?



Themes in comments

- **Political Resistance:** There is a prevalent theme of politicians being resistant to certain campaigns, either due to conflicting priorities, fear of backlash, or ideological differences. Some politicians may only pay lip service to certain issues without taking substantive action.

“In the past year, clean air has been treated as a political football, and the central government has referred to clean air policies as a 'war on motorists'. Therefore many politicians on a national, regional and local level have been resistant and some even hostile towards our campaigning.”

- *“Politicians - some support but many either don't see it as a real priority (only give lip service) or see it as a threat to their priorities/world view.”*



Themes in comments

- **Media Criticism:** Many responses mention media backlash, where certain outlets frame campaigns negatively or misrepresent their goals. This can include right-wing media criticising progressive initiatives or using divisive language to undermine campaigns.
- *“Negative articles about environmental organisations and the way they are run, negative comments from MPs about organised campaigns.”*
- *“There has been considerable lobbying from vested interests which has influenced politicians, the media, government staff as well as the regulatory bodies. This has severely undermined policy progress and been a crucial determinant of success and the campaign strategy.”*



Themes in comments

- **Internal Resistance:** Some organisations face resistance internally, whether it's a lack of awareness of the importance of campaigning, concerns about losing corporate donors, or disagreements over campaign strategies.
- *"Internally - this is more a resistance, as there is still a lack of awareness within our organisation of the importance of campaigning and how it contributes to our wider organisational strategy. As a result, we have had difficulty bidding for internal time and resources compared to our other workstreams."*
- *"Internal structures and priorities being slow and resistant to campaigning."*



Themes in comments

- **Donor Concerns:** Donors sometimes express concerns about potential backlash or association with controversial campaigns. This can lead to hesitation or reluctance to support certain initiatives, particularly if they are perceived as politically charged.

Challenges from Regulatory Bodies: Regulatory bodies may pose challenges to campaigns, either through restrictive regulations or reluctance to support certain causes.

Threats and Intimidation: Some campaigns face direct threats, intimidation, or harassment, particularly on social media platforms. This can include trolling, online abuse, or even physical attacks in extreme cases.



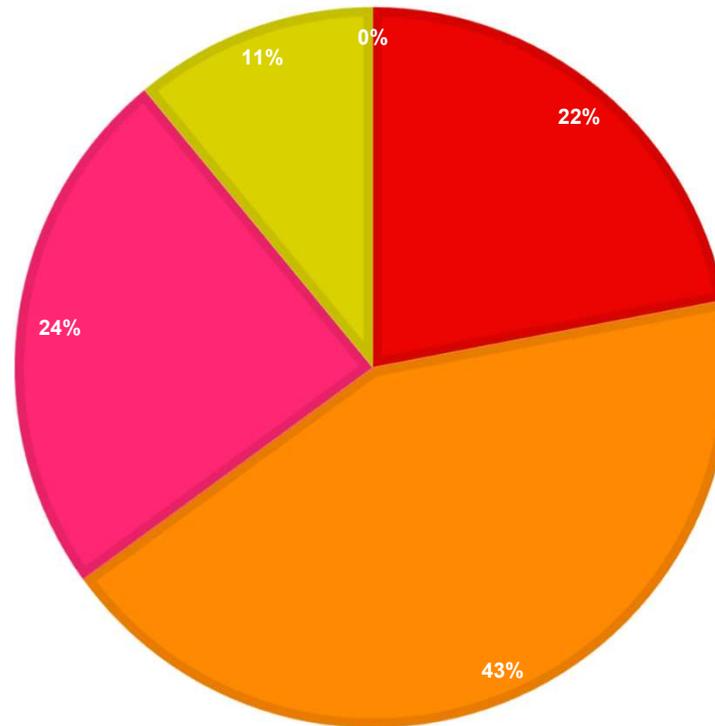
Themes in comments

Legal and Regulatory Challenges: Organisations may encounter legal challenges or regulatory obstacles that impede their campaigning efforts. This can include laws restricting protest rights or regulations that limit advocacy work.

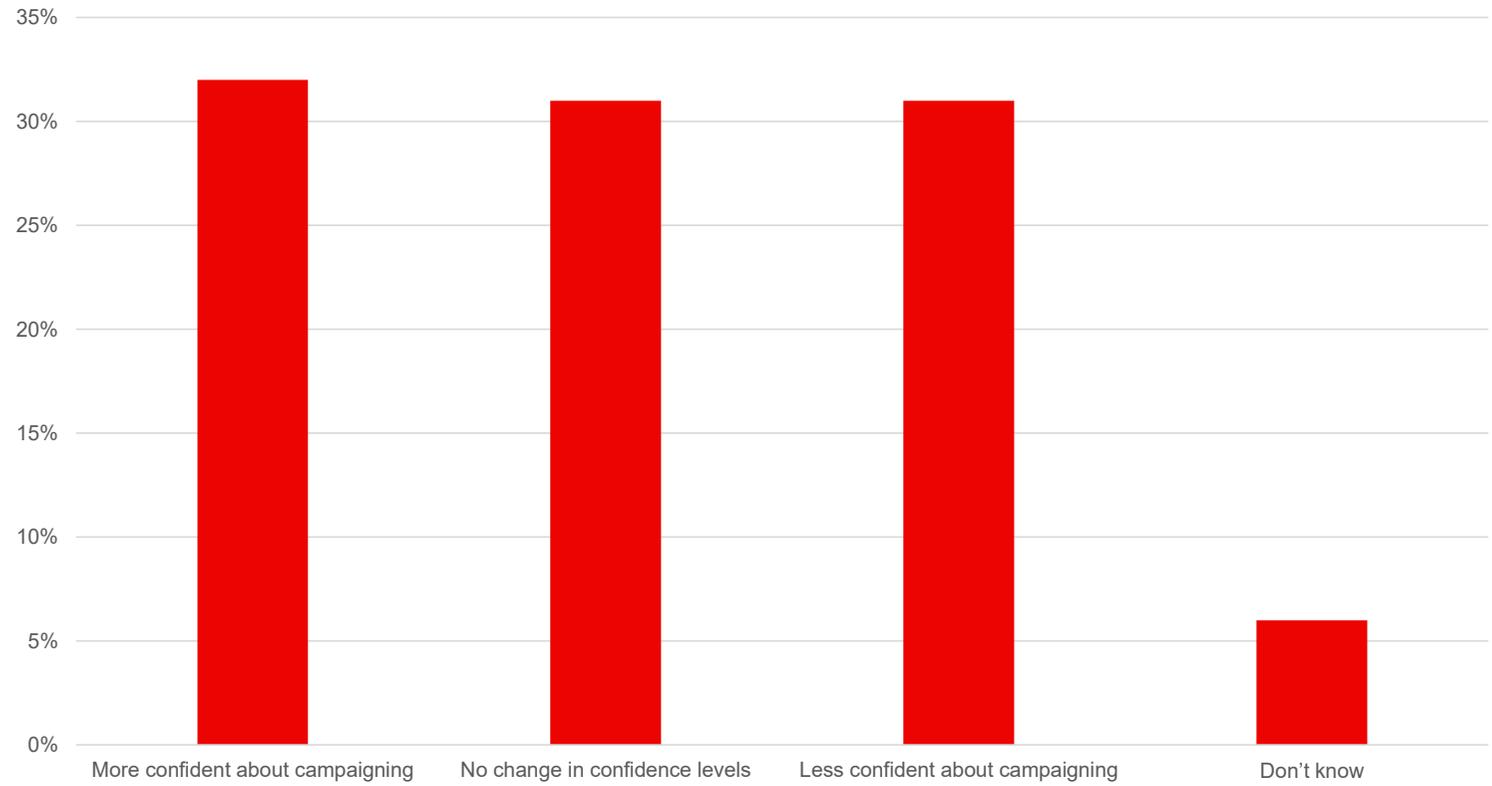


HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE OVERALL LANDSCAPE IN THE UK HAS AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO CAMPAIGN OVER THE PAST YEAR?

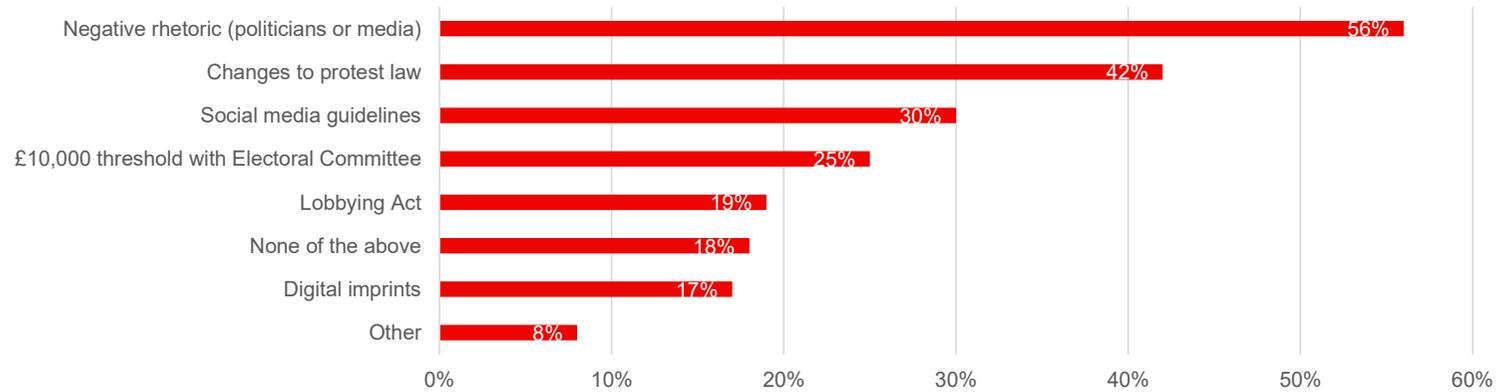
■ Much harder ■ A little harder ■ No change ■ A little easier ■ Much easier



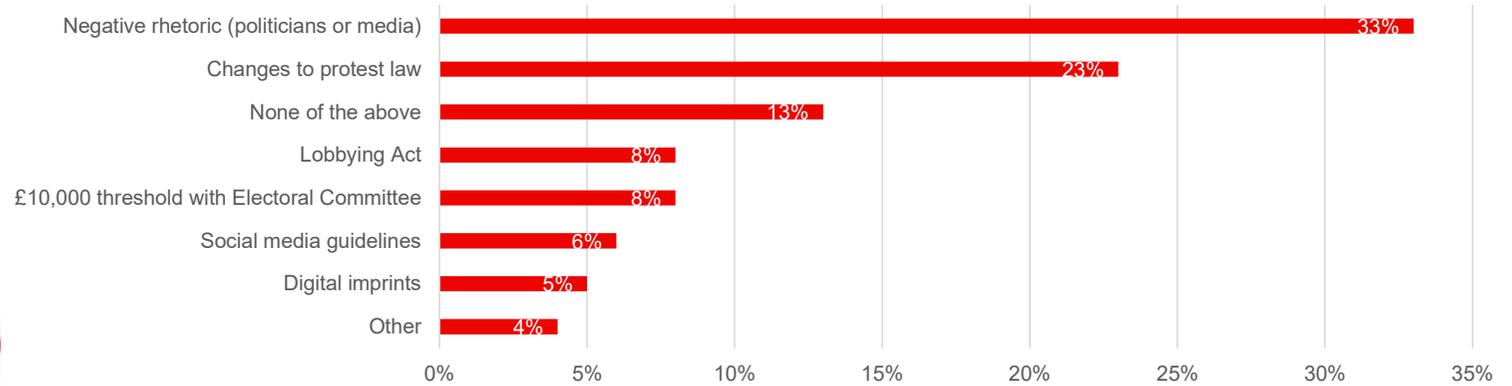
Thinking about civil society campaigning broadly, do you think the last 12 months has seen...



Have any of the following issues, laws, policies, or guidance affected your campaigning? (Please tick all that apply)

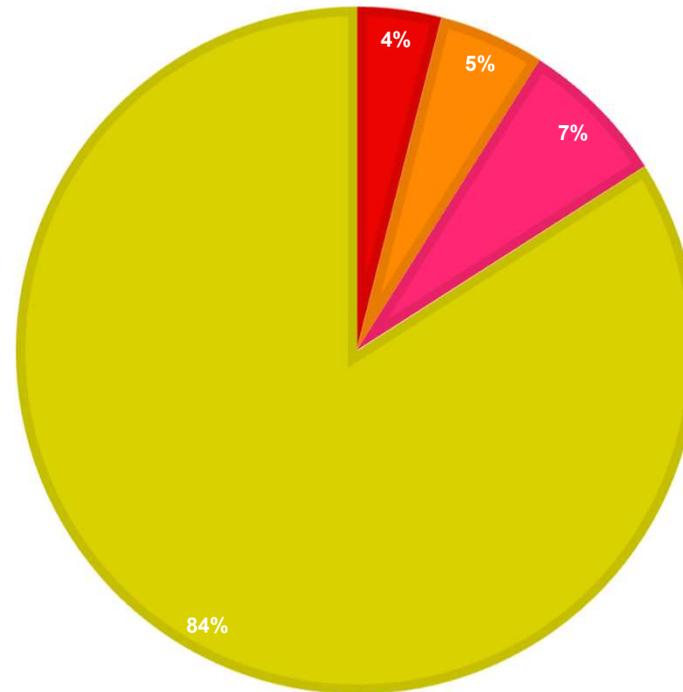


Can you tell us which of the above causes you greatest concern with regard to how you campaign?

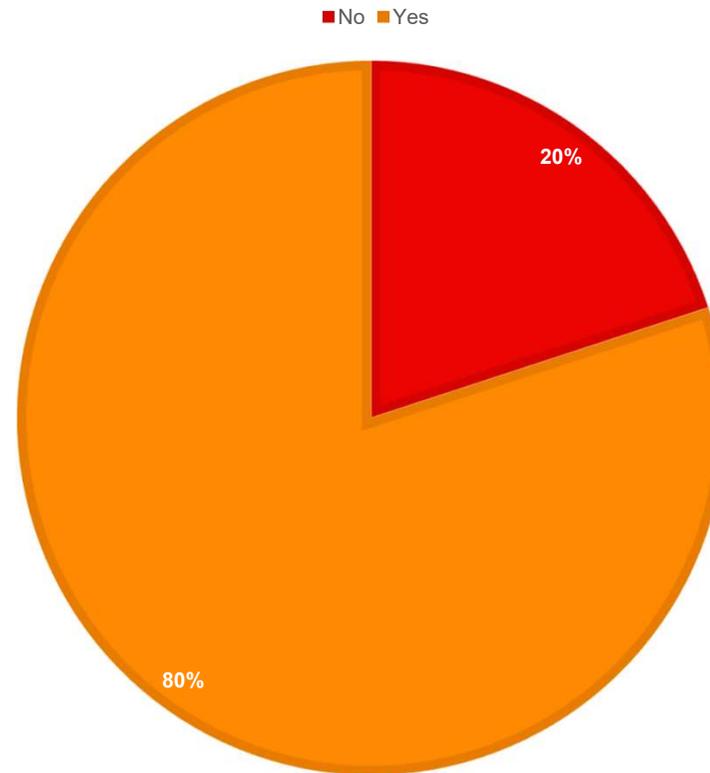


DOES YOUR ORGANISATION REGARD CAMPAIGNING AS A VITAL WAY TO DELIVER ITS MISSION?

■ I don't work for an organisation ■ No ■ Don't Know ■ Yes

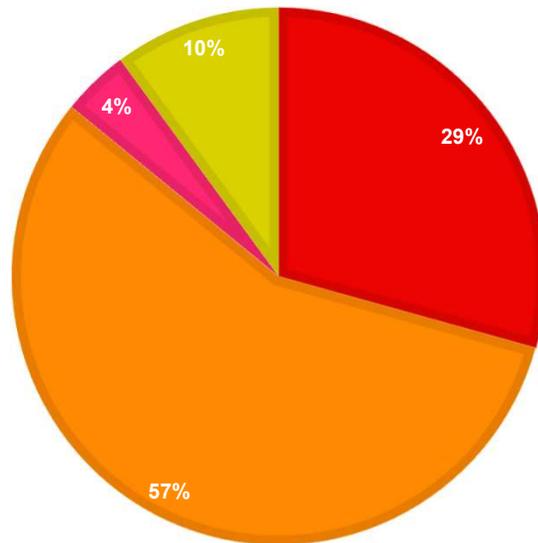


IS YOUR CAMPAIGNING PRIMARILY CARRIED OUT WITH OR FOR A REGISTERED CHARITY?



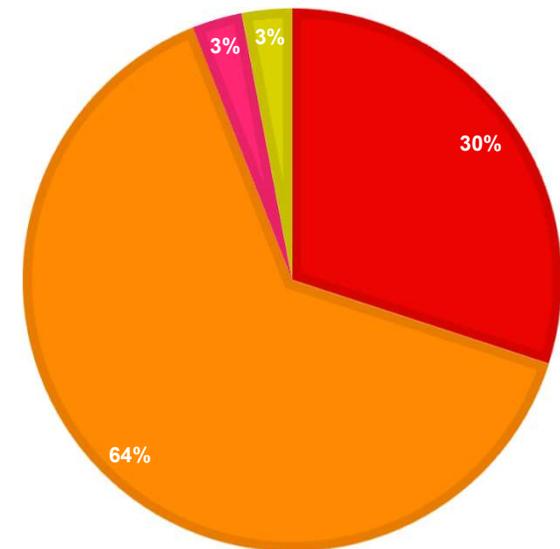
THINKING ABOUT YOUR BOARD'S APPROACH TO CAMPAIGNING AND RISK MANAGEMENT, DO YOU THINK THEIR APPROACH IS...

- Too risk averse when it comes to campaigning
- Get the balance between the risks and rewards of campaigning about right
- Too ready to take risks when it comes to campaigning
- I don't know



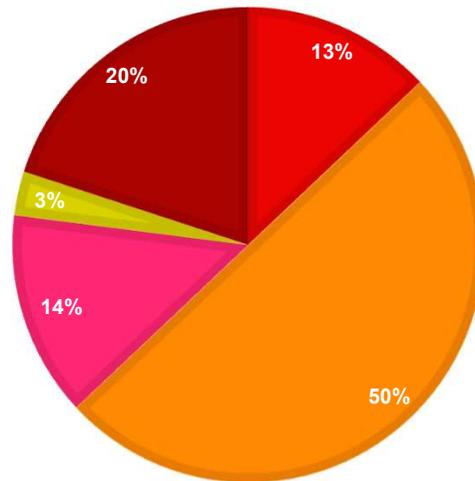
HOW DOES YOUR ORGANISATION INTERPRET THE BOUNDARIES OF LEGITIMATE CAMPAIGNING?

- Too narrowly
- About right
- Too broadly
- Don't know



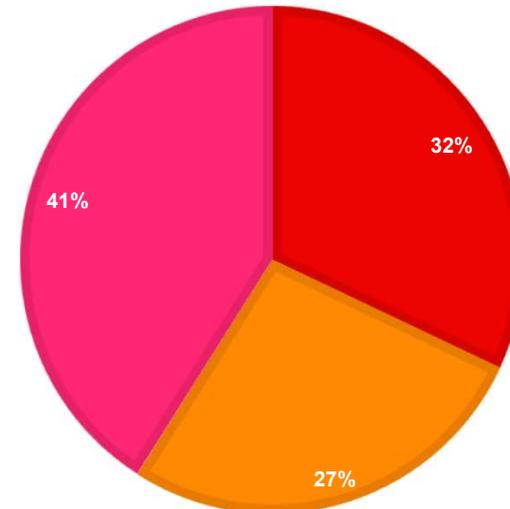
WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR VIEW OF THE CHARITY COMMISSION'S GUIDANCE ON CHARITY CAMPAIGNING?

Very clear Somewhat clear Somewhat unclear Very unclear Not familiar



DO YOU THINK THE CHARITY COMMISSION'S FORMAL GUIDANCE AND PUBLIC COMMENTARY ON CAMPAIGNING MATCH UP?

Yes No Don't know

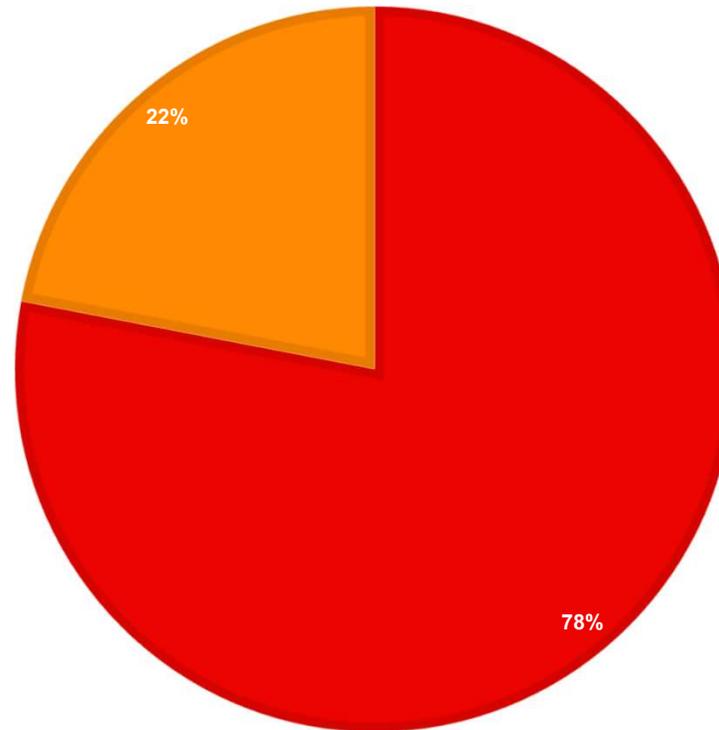


Campaigning tactics and trends

NB Percentages may not total 100% as figures have been rounded to a whole number and where participants were able to select more than one answer

**HAVE YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION HAD A CAMPAIGN WIN
OR ACHIEVED A MILESTONE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?**

■ Yes ■ No



Reflecting on any success, what strategies or approaches were most effective?

- **Storytelling and Personal Engagement:**
 - Sharing personal stories to illustrate the impact of issues
 - Face-to-face meetings with stakeholders and decision-makers
 - Building relationships with affected individuals and communities.
- **Advocacy and Public Affairs:**
 - Engaging in a public affairs mindset and focusing on overarching objectives
 - Cross-movement action and consistent public awareness
 - Networking, lobbying, and engaging with policymakers and politicians.
- **Research and Evidence-Based Advocacy:**
 - Utilising fact-based reports and building evidence to support campaign asks
 - Undertaking formal research and gathering robust data sets.



Reflecting on any success, what strategies or approaches were most effective?

- **Coalition Building and Collaboration:**
 - Forming coalitions with other organisations to amplify voices and resources
 - Working with a network of allies and supporters to advance shared goals.
- **Craftivism and Creative Campaigning:**
 - Implementing craftivism projects to engage communities
 - Using creative assets on social media and engaging content to attract attention.
- **Strategic Communications and Media Engagement:**
 - Tailoring communication strategies to engage target audiences effectively
 - Securing media attention and coverage to raise awareness of issues.



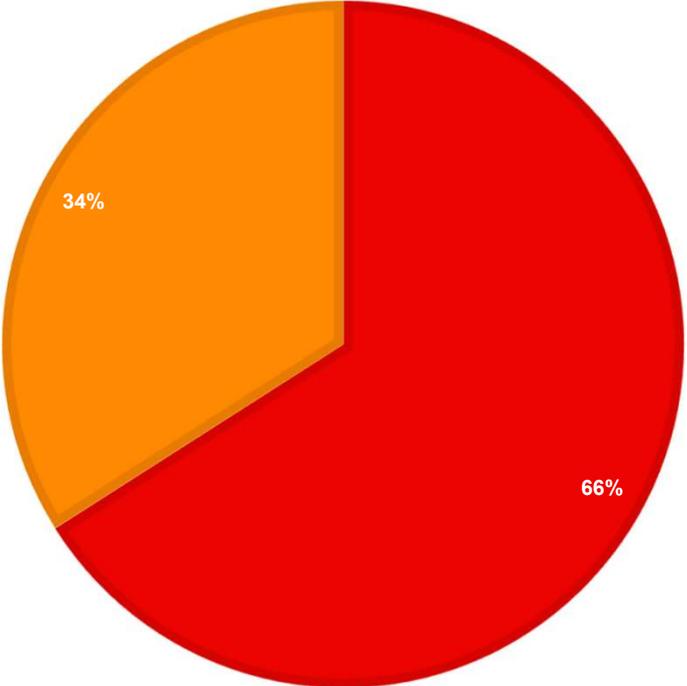
Reflecting on any success, what strategies or approaches were most effective?

- **Policy Influence and Insider Campaigning:**
 - Advocating for policy change through inside track engagement with government
 - Working with political leaders to prioritise campaign issues and influence policy.
- **Persistence and Grassroots Organising:**
 - Persistently advocating for change and maintaining momentum
 - Mobilising grassroots activists and communities to drive change.
- **Cultural and Language Inclusivity:**
 - Breaking down language barriers and ensuring inclusivity in communication efforts
 - Engaging with diverse communities and speaking directly to their needs and concerns.
- **Digital Campaigning and Network Channels:**
 - Leveraging digital platforms and network channels to reach and engage supporters
 - Using network channels to build support and win over people's hearts.



**THINKING NOT JUST ABOUT YOURSELF OR YOUR ORGANISATION BUT
CAMPAIGNING MORE BROADLY, HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY TRENDS OR
PATTERNS IN SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS IN RECENT YEARS?**

■ Yes ■ No



If you have observed any trends or patterns in successful campaigns in recent years, can you please tell us more?

- **On-the-ground Actions:** Successful campaigns often involve physical demonstrations, protests, rallies, and other forms of direct action to mobilise support and raise awareness.
- **Media Engagement:** Media outrage and coverage play a crucial role in successful campaigns. Utilising live events, capturing public attention through storytelling, and leveraging sympathetic mainstream media coverage contribute to campaign success.
- **Storytelling and Personal Connection:** Campaigns that incorporate personal stories and human connections tend to resonate more with the public. Sharing lived experiences, focusing on real-life impacts, and involving affected individuals in campaign messaging are effective strategies.

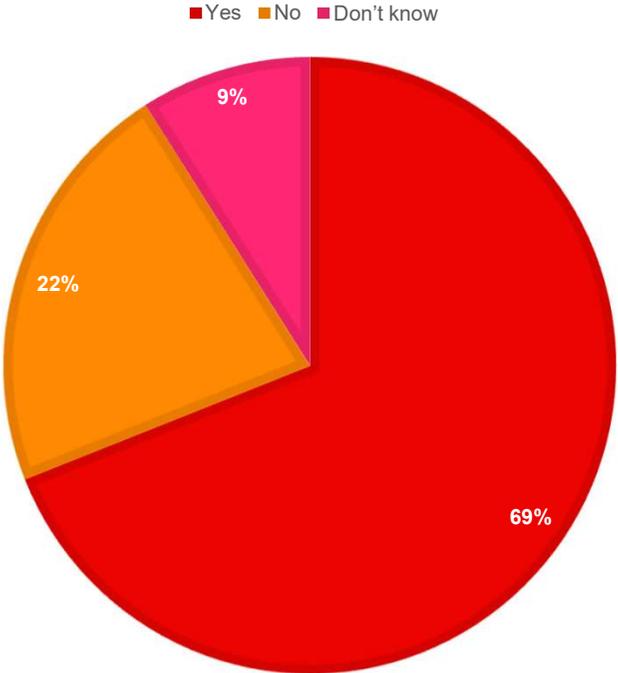


If you have observed any trends or patterns in successful campaigns in recent years, can you please tell us more?

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Unusual strategic partnerships and collaborations with diverse groups can help reach wider audiences and amplify campaign messages. Building coalitions, networking, and thinking outside the box are essential for success.
- **Legal and Legislative Action:** Some successful campaigns utilise legal mechanisms, such as lawsuits, judicial reviews, or private members bills, to achieve their goals. Legislative campaigning and focusing on specific tangible changes also contribute to success.
- **Community Organising and Grassroots Movements:** Emphasising community organising, grassroots activism, and empowering local communities are effective strategies for campaign success. Building grassroots support and engaging with local issues resonate with the public.

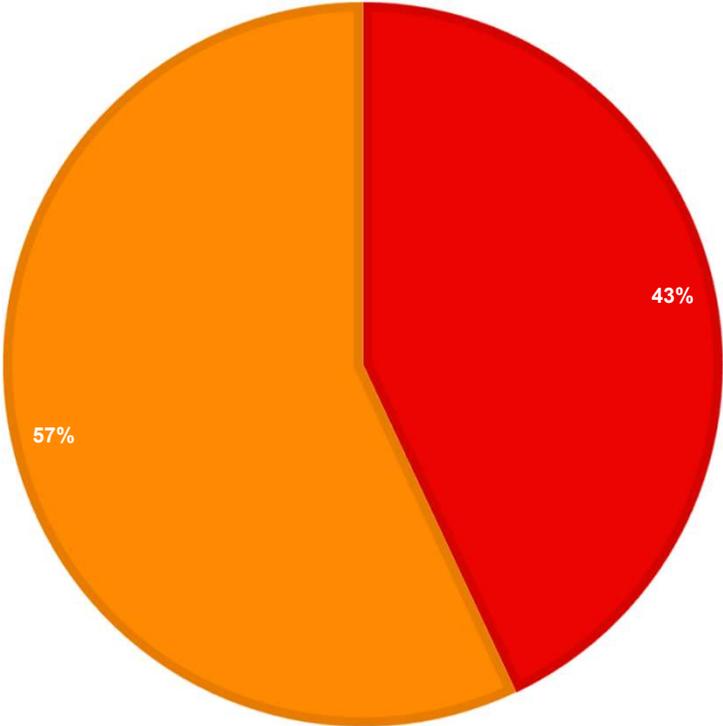


HAVE YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION CONSCIOUSLY CHANGED ANY TACTICS OR APPROACHES IN YOUR CAMPAIGNING IN RECENT YEARS?

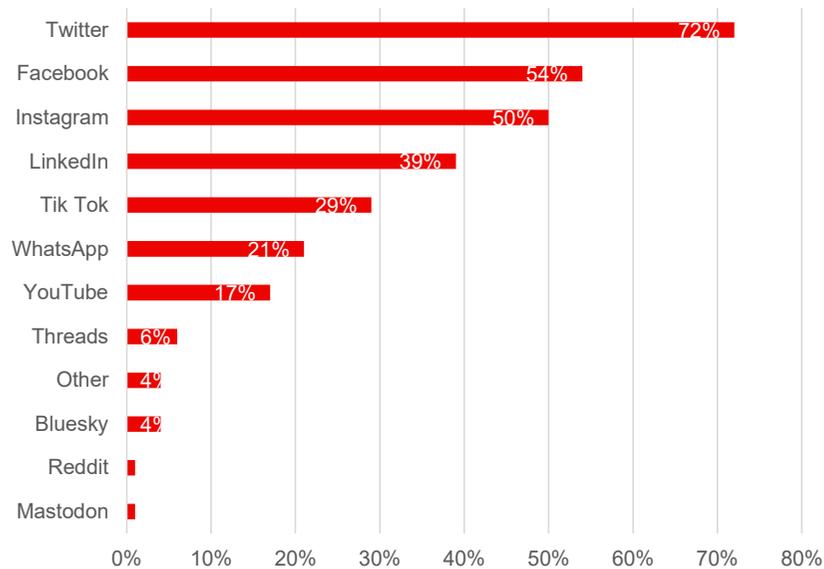


HAS YOUR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CAMPAIGNING CHANGED OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS? PERCENTAGE

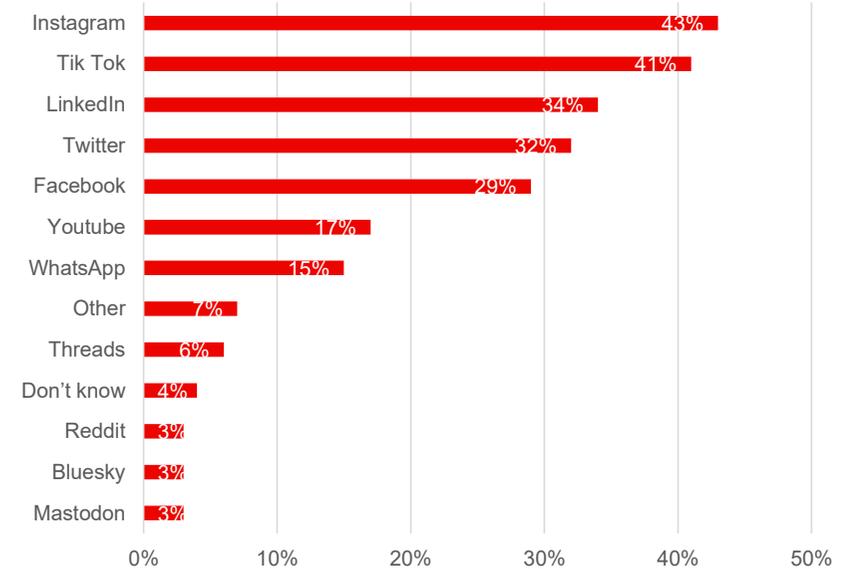
Yes No



Which of these social media platforms do you view as most useful in your campaigning? [Choose up to four]



Do you intend to increase your use (or use for the first time) any of these social media platforms in the next 12 months? [Choose up to four]

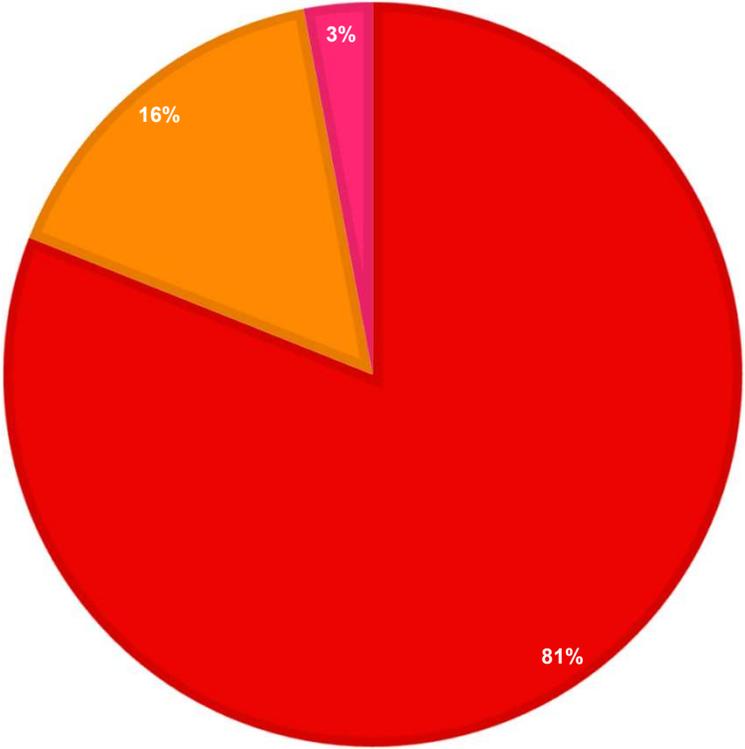


You as a campaigner

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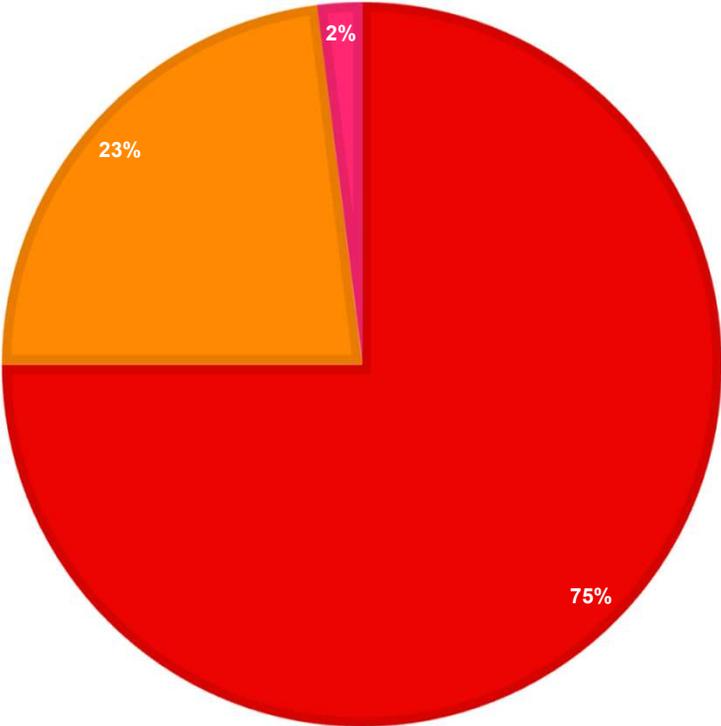
DO YOU FEEL THE PRESSURE HAS GROWN ON YOU AS A CAMPAIGNER IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? PERCENTAGE

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



HAVE YOU QUESTIONED WHETHER YOU HAVE THE ENERGY LEVELS TO KEEP CAMPAIGNING IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? PERCENTAGE

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



If you could only use three words to describe what it has been like being a campaigner in 2023, what would they be? (Open question)

Challenging (42 respondents)

Tiring (29 respondents)

Rewarding (24 respondents)

Exciting (23 respondents)

Frustrating (22 respondents)

Hard (20 respondents)

Exhausting (19 respondents)

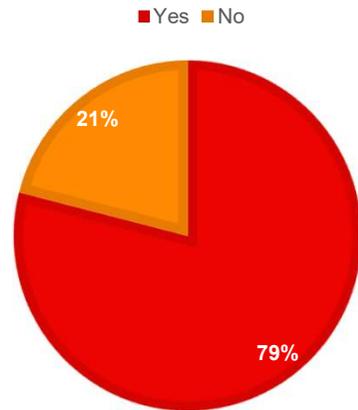
Hopeful (12 respondents)

Depressing (9 respondents)

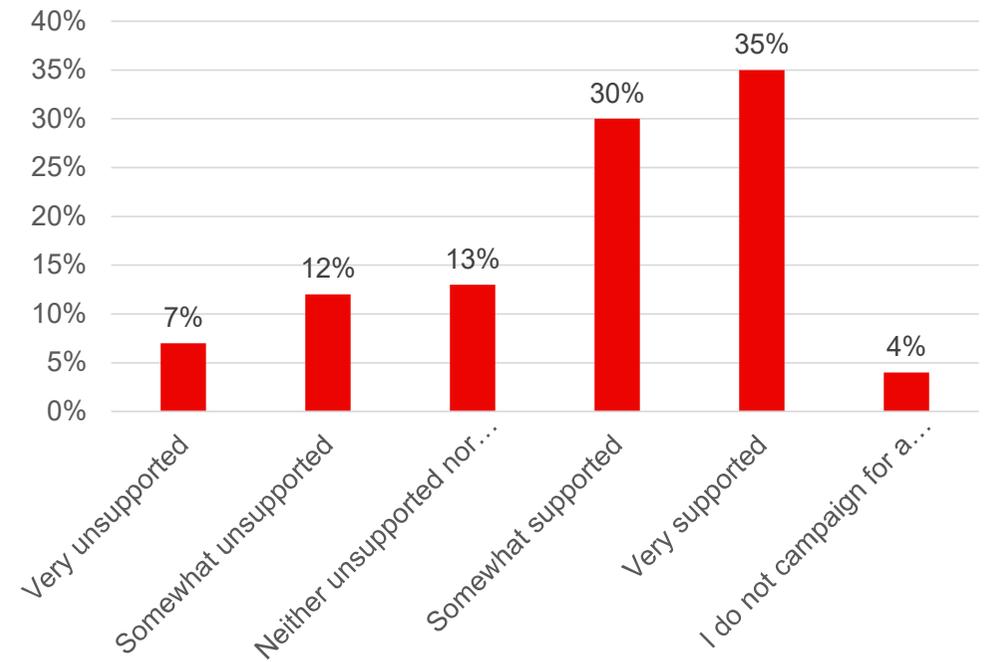
Intense (8 respondents)



**ARE YOU CURRENTLY PAID FOR
CAMPAIGNING WORK, WHETHER AS
ALL OR PART OF YOUR ROLE?
PERCENTAGE**

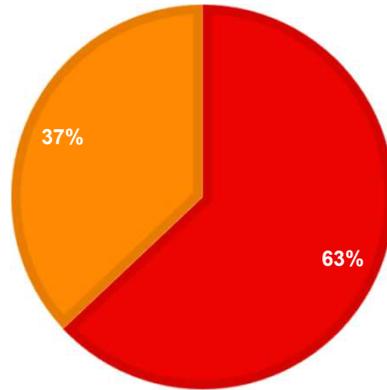


**If your work involves campaigning
for an organisation, how supported
do you feel?**



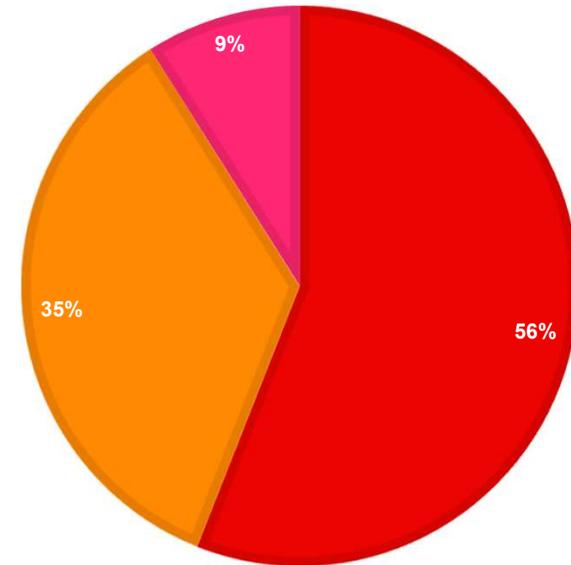
DO YOU HAVE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE ISSUE WHICH YOU'RE CAMPAIGNING ON?

■ Yes ■ No



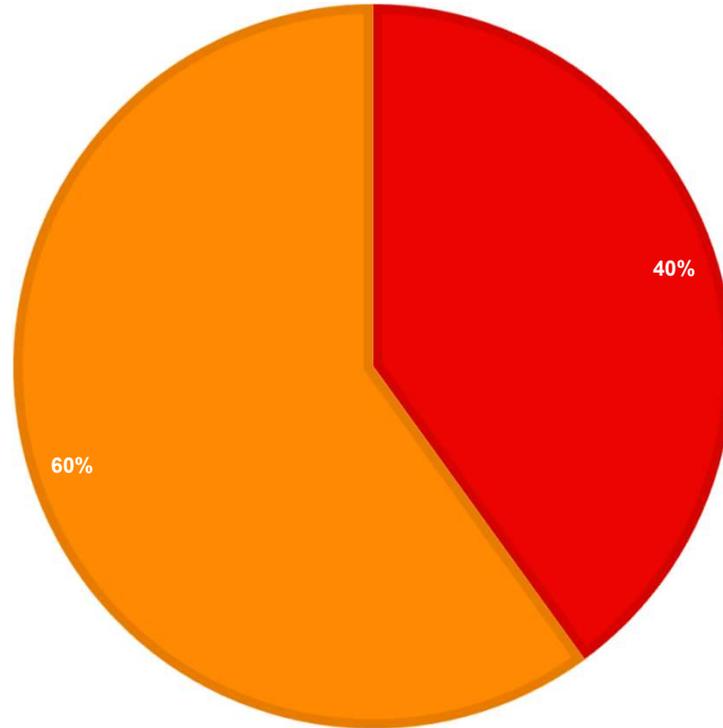
DO YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS SOMEONE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE? (ONLY THOSE WHO ANSWERED YES ABOVE)

■ Yes ■ No ■ Other



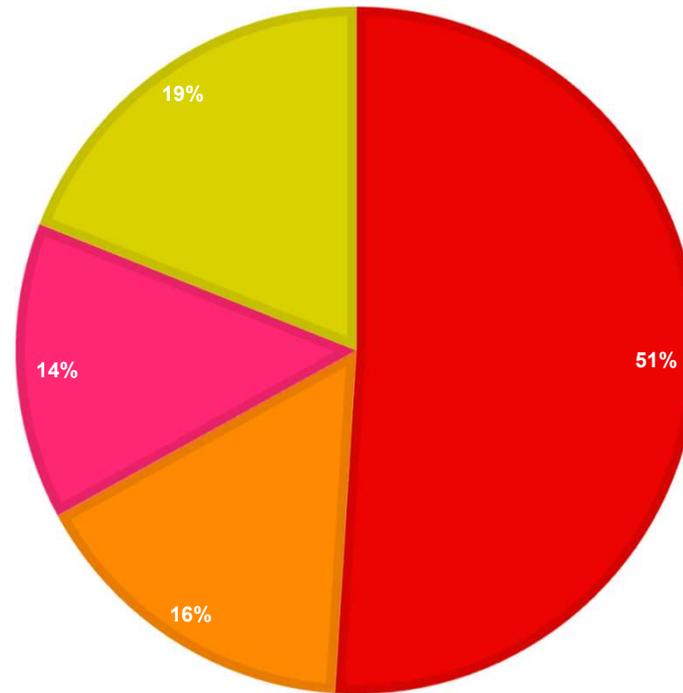
**DO YOU THINK THERE IS ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE
CAMPAIGNING FROM THEIR FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE?**

■ Yes ■ No



IF YOU WORK FOR AN ORGANISATION, DO YOU THINK YOUR ORGANISATION ADEQUATELY INVOLVES PEOPLE WITH FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE IN ITS CAMPAIGNING?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ Other



You felt your organisation didn't adequately involve people with first-hand experience in its campaigning, can you please tell us more about your concerns?

"We're at the very early stages of doing this and there are no set procedures around how to involve people, how to pay them etc."

"We have tried to do this more over recent years, it is specialist, hard work and resource-intensive..."

"There is low understanding of involving people with lived experience and how to do that well here."



You felt your organisation didn't adequately involve people with first-hand experience in its campaigning, can you please tell us more about your concerns?

"It's a journey, and the people with lived experience can be hard to find, access and engage."

"Our previous work on this has been patchy and sometimes tokenistic."

"However, we need to be able to find the funds to support these local partners to do their work, not expect them or the people they work with to do this work for free."



You felt your organisation didn't adequately involve people with first-hand experience in its campaigning, can you please tell us more about your concerns?

"The organisation needs to get much better at involving people with first-hand experience from the outset of any campaign initiative."

"We would like to involve more people from a wider mix of ethnic backgrounds, more young people and more people living on low incomes or in more disadvantaged communities in our work."

"We're working on it! And this is a cause I'm passionate about."



You felt your organisation didn't adequately involve people with first-hand experience in its campaigning, can you please tell us more about your concerns?

"Campaigns may not accurately represent the views and experiences of those directly affected by the issues at hand."

"We could do more to raise the voices of those most affected by the climate crisis."

"We use case studies but it would be good to have people with lived experiences campaigning for us."



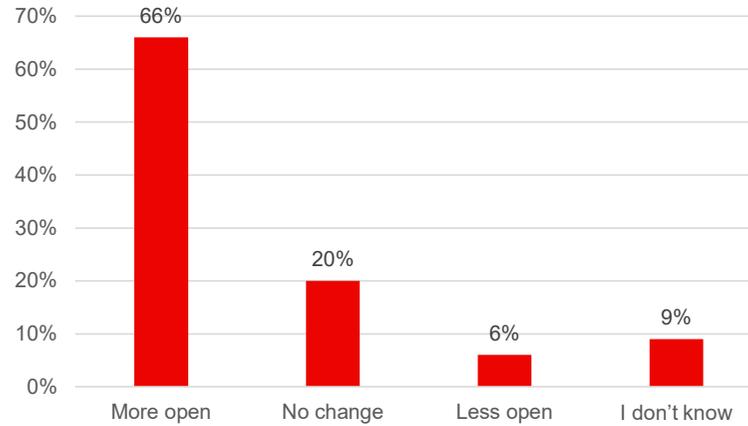
How might a new government affect campaigning?

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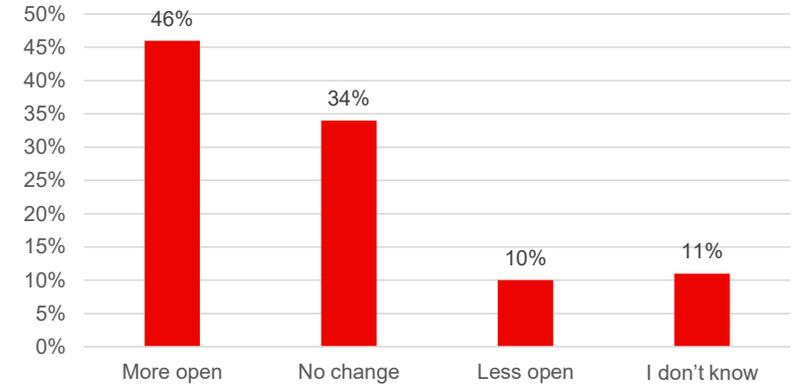
How might a Labour Government approach...



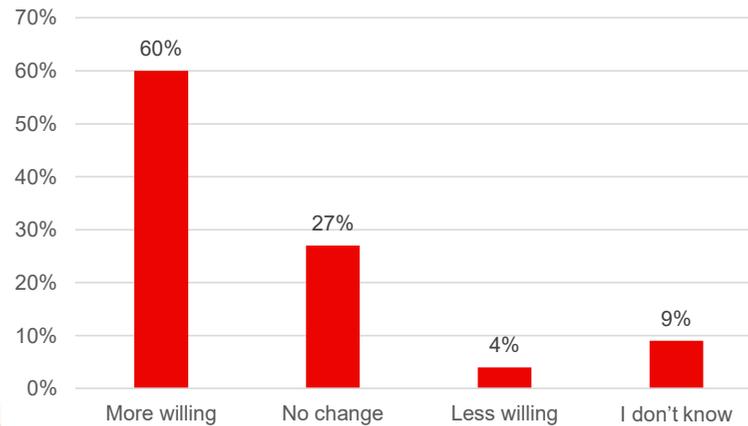
Development of future policy



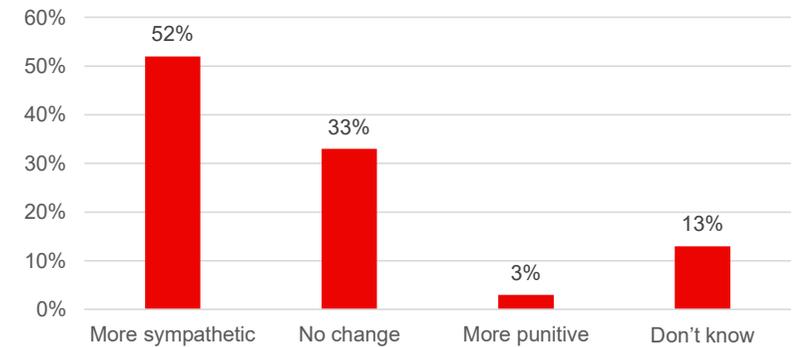
Willingness to enter into robust public political debate



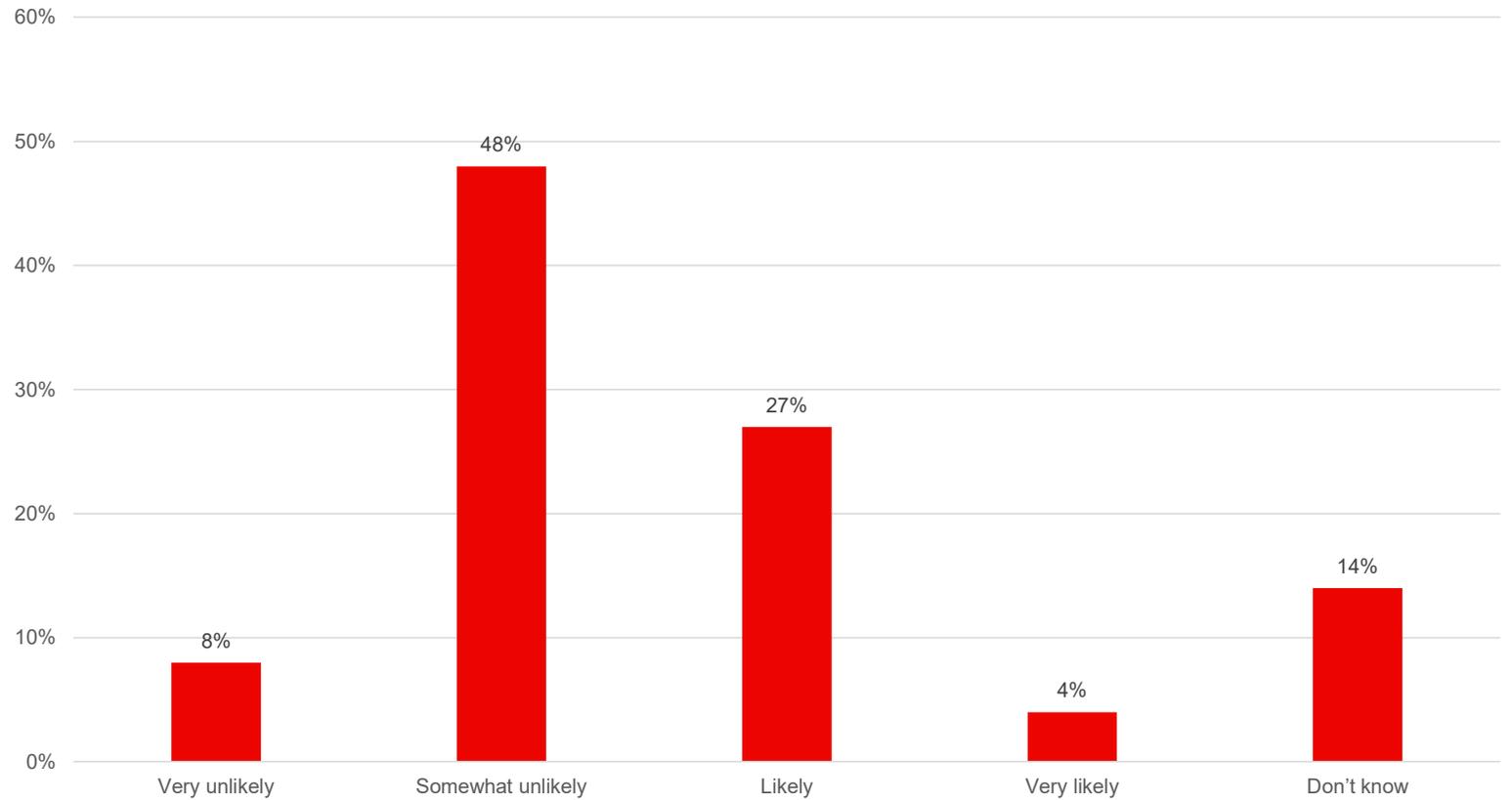
Meaningful public consultation



New laws relating to or affecting civil society (rights of assembly and protest, regulation of charities or trades unions, election law, etc.)



How likely do you think it is that a future Labour Government would review, amend, or repeal legislation that currently affects the freedom to campaign and organise in its first term? For example, the Lobbying Act or new protest laws?



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